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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 17 to 20 as follows. Copies of the amended claims, marked to show changes from their prior versions, are set forth in Appendix A attached hereto.

17. (Amended) A computer-readable medium having encoded thereon computer-executable process steps, said process steps for detecting defects in a reticle used in integrated circuit chip fabrication, wherein said process steps comprise steps to:

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- (a) obtain digital image data corresponding to an image of a reticle;
 - (b) process the digital image data according to predetermined criteria to identify defects; and
 - (c) simulate a response that would be produced if the reticle were to be utilized in a photolithographic system, by processing the digital image data corresponding to the reticle.

18. (Amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 17, wherein said computer readable medium comprises at least one of a magnetic diskette, magnetic tape, a CD-ROM, a random access memory chip, and a read-only computer memory chip.

19. (Amended) A computer-readable medium having encoded thereon computer-executable process steps, said process steps for detecting defects in a reticle used in integrated circuit chip fabrication, said process steps comprising steps to:

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- (a) obtain digital image data corresponding to an image of a reticle;
 - (b) process the digital image data according to predetermined criteria to identify defects;
 - (c) specify a window around one of the defects identified in step (b); and
 - (d) simulate a response that would be produced if the window specified in step (c) were to be utilized in a photolithographic system, by processing digital image data corresponding to the window specified in step (c).

20. (Amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 19, wherein said computer readable medium comprises at least one of a magnetic diskette, magnetic tape, a CD-ROM, a random access memory chip, and a read-only computer memory chip.
